Move to reduce export cost of agricultural commodities

2537. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether after deregulating the exports of several agricultural commodities his Ministry is now reducing export cost of these commodities;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry has planned to move away from extending indirect subsidy to farmers and provide direct assistance to them to make their product competitive;

(c) if so, what extent this move has given a boost to the agricultural export;

(d) the other facilities being provided to reduce the cost of agricultural export; and

(e) to what extent his Ministry has been successful in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (e) The Government's efforts are directed at improving export competitiveness of agricultural commodities which include *inter alia* financial assistance for quality improvement and technological upgradation, packaging, research and development, setting up of cold chain and perishable cargo handling facilities. In the case of rice, wheat and wheat products certain WTO admissible costs on marketing and transport are also reimbursed.

The agricultural exports (excluding marine products, tea, coffee, cotton and caster oil) were to the tune of Rs. 18,667 crores during the year 2001-02 (April-March) *vis-a-vis* Rs. 16,773 crores during the year 2000-01 (April-March) showing an increase of Rs. 1894 crores and were at Rs. 8075.43 crores during the year 2002-03 (April-August) *vis-a-vis* Rs. 7050.62 crores during the year 2001-02 (April-August) showing an increase of Rs. 1024.81 crores.

(Source: DGCI&S, Kolkata)